

Dear Pemlogian freshers,

Many congratulations on getting into the most prestigious course at the best college at Cambridge! I am Alex, a second year theologian at Pembroke writing as the subject rep to tell you about what Theology at Cambridge and what the transition from school is like.

If you are like me (and all other freshers at Cambridge), beads of sweat will be dripping down your brows just imagining the stuffy academics and intellectuals at Cambridge. The transition from school to Cambridge isn't helped by the stories of Cambridge being an academic factory which will either make or break you! Although the work can get tough, with 1 or 2 x 2000 word essays a week and a chapter of your scriptural language textbook, and you unfortunately will have some late nights drinking cappuccinos and listening to Amy Winehouse (maybe this was just me?), it is all worth it and you will soon work out how to balance your time effectively and you will grow to love both Cambridge and your course!

Despite this, I have thought up a few tips which I wish I had known before starting:

- 1) Do NOT worry about attempting to read everything on the preliminary reading list! It is great to choose a few things that you find particularly interesting in the papers you want to take, but you don't have to. I would however recommend trying to learn the alphabet of the scriptural language you are going to take (unless you know it already!), simply because it will make your first few weeks more enjoyable!

As a follow up point, if you need any advice about papers that you are thinking of taking, or you would like to know more about what Theology essays or scriptural languages are like, feel free to contact me!

- 2) During term, Do NOT let life revolve around work. I cannot emphasise enough how important it is to balance your time between work, socialising and extra-curricular. One of the best things about Cambridge (and Pembroke especially) is the opportunity to indulge in all types of extra-curricular whether you want to get involved in amateur drama, sport, music or air squadron society.

- 3) Take advantage of the stuff the faculty has to offer! Although it may be very tempting to not go to your lectures because they don't seem relevant, I cannot emphasise enough how useful these will be, not only with essays but for revision in exam term. Additionally, every day the faculty has free tea and coffee at 10am and the opportunity to speak to other academics about events and speakers coming up in the term.

At the start of Freshers' s week I will organise a lunch for all the Pembroke Theologians so you can meet everyone and ask anything you're not clear about. If you ever have any questions/just want to talk to someone about Theology problems (or anything else), feel free to send me an email ads78@cam.ac.uk or contact me on Facebook. Just always remember that even though it's hard sometimes, there is so much support and so many people who want you to do well. You are good enough to be here, and you're going to have an amazing time.

Have a fabulous rest of summer, looking forward to meeting you in October,

Alex Szlezinger